

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-11 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph Objection to the Specification

The Specification was objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for being “written in a non-idiomatic expression” and thereby rendering the meaning vague and indefinite. The specification has been amended throughout to fix grammatical errors and to use proper idiomatic English. The expressions that were changed to place them in better idiomatic English are as follows:

- “Gravitationally” has been changed to “by gravity” to indicate how the molten aluminum flows;
- “Slidingly” has been replaced with a description of the “sliding relationship” between two components;
- “Rotatively” has been replaced with a description that a component is “allowed to rotate” with respect to another component;
- “Trespassing” has been replaced with by “passing through”; and
- In most instances, “inferiorly” and “superiorly” were changed to refer to “upper portions” and “lower portions” of the components they were used to describe, respectively. Notably on page 5, line 4 of the marked-up copy of the substitute specification, attached herewith, “peripherally and superiorly affixed” was amended to describe that the bottom portions of the axial columns 13 are affixed around the outer portions of the basic block 11 to bring it into conformance with Figures 4 and 5.

Additionally, the Examiner contends that it is unclear how the mold can be closed if the two mold halves achieve a larger spacing than in the closed mold positions, referring to Applicant’s

description in the Specification that “the axial columns 13 may carry a spacer 70, for example in the form of a tubular sleeve provided between the moveable block 12 and the locking means 15 and which will be seated against the two mold portions when the latter reach a certain minimum spacing larger than that corresponding to the respective closed mold positions.” Referring to Applicant’s Figure 4, illustrating the mold in a closed position, if the spacer 70 were removed, then the elastic means 50 would press the movable block 12 upwards, the force of which would cause the lamination stack PL to compress between the stationary upper mold portion 20 and the movable block 12. In other words, as shown in Figure 4, the spacer 70 assures a larger minimum spacing by preventing the lamination stack PL from being axially compressed by the elastic means 50 to an excessive degree. Thus, the spacer 70 results in a closed mold having a larger spacing between the mold halves than the respective closed mold positions of the mold halves absent the spacer 70.

All changes to the specification are idiomatic or grammatical in nature, and supported by the drawings; thus, no new matter has been added. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the same reasons as the objection to the specification. Claims 1-11 have been amended similarly to the specification in order to place them into conformance with idiomatic English and thus, the amendments do not affect the scope of the claims. Since the claims are now in compliance with the same proper idiomatic English as the specification, and for the same reasons as discussed above, claims 1-11 are now considered definite and in condition for allowance.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 1-11 contain allowable subject matter.

CENTRIFUGATION INJECTION MOLD

Field of the Invention

The present invention refers to a two-piece mold used in the injection, by centrifugation, of the cage made of aluminum or other adequate material into the stack of steel laminations of the rotor of an electric motor, particularly the rotor of small electric motors, such as those used in the hermetic compressors of refrigeration systems.

Background of the Invention

It is already known from the prior art the centrifugation injection of the aluminum cages in rotors, which are formed by a stack of overlapped annular steel laminations provided with openings that are longitudinally aligned with the openings of other laminations of the stack, in order to define a plurality of axial channels interconnecting the external faces of the end laminations of the stack and which are angularly spaced from each other along a circular alignment, which is concentric to the longitudinal axis of the lamination stack, but radially spaced back in relation to the lateral face of the latter.

The lamination stack, with the longitudinal axis vertically disposed, is positioned inside a mold which defines a lower annular cavity close to the external face of the lower end lamination, and an upper cavity, which is substantially cylindrical or frusto-conical, close to the external face of the upper end lamination and opened to the inlet channel for the admission of aluminum into the mold.

During the aluminum pouring, the lamination stack has its central axial bore, into which will be later mounted the shaft of the electric motor, filled with a core having an upper end

substantially leveled with the upper end lamination of the lamination stack, and a widened lower end portion seated on a respective lower end widening of the central axial bore of the lamination stack and against the mold portion that defines the lower cavity.

5 The aluminum is poured into the upper cavity, passing through the axial channels of the lamination stack to the lower cavity, filling the latter, the axial channels and the upper cavity, in this order, solidifying in a radial inward upward pattern, as the mold rotates around its vertical axis and the metals cools.

10 Upon completion of the aluminum pouring and solidification, the mold is opened and the formed rotor is submitted to one or more operations to eliminate the inlet channel and unobstruct the adjacent end of the central axial bore of the lamination stack, and to define the correct internal profile for the upper ring of the aluminum cage, which further comprises in a single piece, a lower ring already formed by the mold, and a plurality of bars formed inside the axial channels of the lamination stack.

15 In the centrifugation injection of these rotors, the upper and lower cavities of the mold and the lamination stack itself are heated, so that the aluminum passes through the upper cavity and through the axial channels of the lamination stack without solidifying, ~~gravitationally by~~ gravity reaching the lower cavity, filling it and starting to solidify from the outside to the inside, and from the bottom upwardly, while the mold remains rotating.

20 In order to allow the injection mold, which ~~superiorly and inferiorly~~ involves and locks the upper and lower portions of the lamination stack, to rotate around its vertical longitudinal axis, the upper and lower cavities of the mold are mounted, respectively, to an upper bearing and to a lower bearing that are carried by the structure of the injection equipment.

In the molds of the above mentioned type, the deviations of concentricity and parallelism that occur between the axes of the upper and lower cavities cause vibrations in the mold and in the lamination stack during the rotation of the mold, which vibrations actuate in the metallic material being solidified in the upper and lower cavities.

5 A major problem caused by said vibrations of the rotating mold during the solidification of the aluminum is that the bars of the cage, which are formed inside the axial channels of the lamination stack, and even the rings, tend to present cracks, the bars being transversally broken in the interior of the lamination stack in a manner not perceived by external visual observation of the finished rotor. The rupture or crack of one or more bars or of the upper and lower rings of the
10 cage considerably impairs the quality of the rotor and consequently the efficiency of the electric motor to be formed.

One of the possibilities to minimize or even eliminate the loss of quality by undue vibrations of the mold during the solidification of the aluminum is to mount the two cavities of the mold on a single lower bearing, whereby the axes of the two mold parts are united. However,
15 in this solution, the upper and lower cavities of the mold are guided by columns affixed to the lower cavity. The upper cavity is axially displaced, guided by the columns, to open and close the mold, whereby the upper cavity is ~~maintained slidingly~~ retained in a sliding relationship with the columns, considerably limiting the automation of the operations of loading the lamination stack in the mold and extracting the centrifuged rotor, besides causing problems of concentricity and
20 rotor strike.

While the mounting of the two mold cavities on a single lower bearing assembly allows eliminating the problem of cracks in the parts of the aluminum cage caused by deviations of concentricity and parallelism between the axes of the two mold cavities, this known prior art

mold still maintains the upper mold cavity mounted to the columns which are axially and eccentrically projected from the lower cavity, when said upper mold cavity reaches the open mold position for the loading of the lamination stack or removal of the centrifuged rotor. Thus, the movement of the lamination stack in and out of the mold must be effected by passing the lamination stack radially through the gap formed between two consecutive columns. This characteristic of the solutions in which there is only one lower bearing and the upper cavity is axially displaced along the columns between the open and closed mold positions requires complex solutions to reach a high degree of automation in the production of the rotors with a short cycle time, impairing the productivity.

Object of the Invention

Aiming at solving the deficiencies of the prior art centrifugation injection molds, in which the upper and lower mold cavities are ~~rotatively~~ mounted to a single lower bearing assembly and allowed to rotate therein, the present invention proposes a mold with a relatively simple and efficient construction, which assures the balanced rotation of the mold during the solidification of the cage in the lamination stack, avoiding vibrations and rupture of the component parts of the cage, particularly its bars, without limiting the access to the interior of the mold in the automatic operations of loading the lamination stack in the mold and extracting the centrifuged rotor.

Summary of the Invention

The mold of the present invention is used in the injection, by centrifugation, of aluminum or other metallic alloy that is suitable to form several parts, such as the cage of the rotor of an electric motor used in hermetic compressors.

According to the invention, the mold comprises: a lower mold portion having a basic block, the lower portion of which is ~~inferiorly and rotatively~~ mounted to and allowed to rotate within bearing means that are affixed to the structure of a centrifugation injection machine; a plurality of axial columns, the bottom portions of which are ~~peripherally and superiorly~~ affixed
5 around ~~to~~ the outer portions of the basic block, and a moveable block defining a lower mold cavity and being ~~slidingly~~ mounted to the axial columns in a sliding relationship, in order to be axially displaced between an open mold position and a closed mold position. Elastic means are seated on the basic block so as to constantly force the moveable block to the closed mold position[[, an]]. An impelling means ~~being further provided~~ is operatively associated with the
10 machine structure and ~~to~~ the moveable block and ~~which~~ is selectively driven to displace the moveable block to the open mold position against the action of the elastic means. An upper mold portion is removably seated on the axial columns and affixed thereto by locking means in a closed mold position.

The constructive arrangement defined above allows for maintaining the two mold
15 portions correctly positioned and aligned in the closed mold position by means of the axial columns, the mold being supported by only one assembly of bearings affixed to the machine structure and which ~~rotatively~~ support and allow the rotation of the lower mold portion. The upper mold portion is conducted to be engaged with the lower mold portion in a positioning that is guaranteed by the axial columns, which are rigidly and correctly affixed to the lower mold
20 portion. This assembly eliminates the problem of the unaligned axes of the two mold portions.

Besides the above-mentioned aspect, the present construction allows the upper mold portion to be completely removed from the axial columns and spaced therefrom by means of a preferably robotized positioning device, whereby the product to receive the injection, for

example the rotor of the electric motor, can be easily positioned inside the open mold, seated on the lower mold portion after being ~~downwardly~~ axially displaced downwards through the inside of the axial columns, independently of the angular position in which said axial columns are found in the lower mold portion.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will be described below, with reference to the enclosed drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a simplified diametrical vertical sectional view of an injection mold in the open condition, with the upper mold portion being removed to allow a steel lamination stack to be
10 received inside the mold of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a view similar to that of FIG. 1, but illustrating the mold still open, but with the lamination stack seated on the lower mold portion;

FIG. 3 is a view similar to that of FIG. 2, but illustrating the upper mold portion in a ~~sliding axial engaging position~~ engagement with the guide means of the axial columns, but still
15 out of its closed mold position and with the moveable block of the lower mold portion being axially displaced to the open mold position;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to that of FIG. 3, but illustrating the lower and upper mold portions in the closed mold position around the lamination stack; and

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken according to line V-V in FIG. 1.

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Description of the Illustrated Embodiment

The figures of the enclosed drawings illustrate the mold used for the injection, by centrifugation, of an aluminum cage incorporated in a lamination stack of an electric motor rotor, this rotor construction being well known in the art. However, it should be understood that the present mold might be applied for the centrifugation injection of other parts that can be negatively affected by the misalignment that occurs between the mold parts during the solidification of the injected hot metal.

The illustrated mold comprises a lower mold portion 10 and an upper mold portion 20 which are ~~relatively and axially~~ coaxially displaced between open and closed mold positions, as described ahead.

The lower mold portion 10 presents a basic block 11 downwardly extended to be ~~inferiorly and rotatively~~ mounted onto bearing means 30 and allowed to rotate therein. The bearing means 30 which are axially spaced from each other and affixed to a machine structure E, generally a machine structure for centrifugation injection. A lower end portion of the basic block 11 projects beyond the bearing means 30 to receive a pulley 40 to be operatively coupled, usually by attrition, to a driving unit (not illustrated) which is dimensioned to produce the rotation of the basic block 11 around its longitudinal axis, upon centrifugation of the molten metal being poured inside the closed mold. The basic block carries a plurality of upper peripheral axial columns 13 ~~that are inferiorly and~~ the lower portions of which are rigidly affixed to the basic block 11 by any adequate process, such as by being inserted into respective eccentric axial housings 11a of the basic block and axially locked by bolts 11b.

In the example illustrated in the figures, only one axial column 13 is shown, although three of these columns are provided equally and mutually spaced by 120°.

The lower mold portion 10 further comprises a moveable block 12 the top portion of which defines, ~~superiorly~~, a lower mold cavity 12a and which is ~~slidingly~~ mounted in a sliding relationship to the axial columns 13 so as to be axially displaced between an open mold position, in which it is approximated to the basic block 11, and a closed mold position, in which it is separated from the basic block 11.

As illustrated, the moveable block 12 is constantly forced to the closed mold position by action of a plurality of elastic means 50 generally in the form of helical springs, which are intercalated and parallel to the axial columns and have a lower end seated on a respective housing 11c provided in the basic block 11, and an upper end seated against the moveable block 12. The elastic means 50 are preferably mounted around respective axial rods 51. The bottom portions of the axial rods 51 are ~~inferiorly~~ affixed to the basic block 11 and ~~which trespass the~~ axial rods 51 pass through the moveable block 12[[,]] in order to have their upper end incorporating a widened head 52, which operates as a stop means for limiting the maximum displacement of the moveable block 12 away from the basic block 11 by action of the elastic means 50 ~~and~~ when the mold is open, with the upper mold portion 20 removed, and said mold prepared to receive the lamination stack PL therewithin, as illustrated in FIGS. 1-2.

As already described in relation to the axial columns 13, the elastic means 50 are generally three elastic means arranged according to the same circular alignment of the axial columns 13 and also circumferentially spaced from each other by 120°, although the figures of the drawings illustrate only one elastic means 50 and the respective axial rod 51. The bottom face of upper mold portion 20 defines, ~~inferiorly~~, an upper mold cavity 20a to be operatively associated with the lower mold cavity 12a upon the closing of the mold, in order to define a plenum to be filled with the liquid metal. In the illustrated example, the upper mold cavity 20a

and the lower mold cavity 12a are respectively associated with the two opposite end faces of the lamination stack PL of an electric motor rotor, as illustrated in FIG. 4.

In the illustrated embodiment, the mold further comprises an impelling means 60, which is driven pneumatically or by any other adequate manner, comprising an elongated rod 61 axially
 5 ~~and slidingly trespassing~~ passing through the basic block 11 and the moveable block 12 of the lower mold portion 10, said elongated rod 61 presenting an upper end provided with an annular flange 62 seated against the central region of the lower mold cavity 12a, and a lower end provided with means to be coupled to any driving device, not illustrated, which is capable of promoting the selective axial displacement of the elongated rod 61 through the lower mold
 10 portion 10. The upper end of the elongated rod 61 further incorporates an axial extension 63 disposed above the annular flange 62 and which is designed to fit inside the central bore of the lamination stack PL, in order to tightly and completely occupy the space defined by said bore, avoiding the admission of liquid metal in this region of the lamination stack PL.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, with the mold being open and the upper mold portion 20
 15 removed, the impelling means 60 has its elongated rod 61 axially upwardly displaced to a loading/unloading position, allowing a lamination stack PL to be tightly fitted around but easily released from the axial extension 63 of the elongated rod 61.

Then, the elongated rod 61 is axially ~~downwardly~~ displaced downwards to the position illustrated in FIG. 2, in which the annular flange 62 is seated on the moveable block 12 of the
 20 lower mold portion 10, and the lower end face of the lamination stack PL is seated on the lower mold cavity 12a.

With the lamination stack PL being positioned on the lower mold cavity 12a, the impelling means 60 is driven to ~~the direction of~~ cause the downward displacement of the elongated rod 61, whose annular flange 62 causes the corresponding downward displacement of the moveable block 12 of the lower mold portion 10, compressing the elastic means 50 and

5 displacing said moveable block 12 with the lower mold cavity 12a toward the open mold position illustrated in FIG. 3. With the lamination stack PL being positioned on the lower mold cavity 12a in an open mold condition, the upper mold portion 20 is displaced by any adequate device (not illustrated) to a position that is vertically aligned with the lower mold portion 10 and disposed above the axial columns 13, to be then axially ~~downwardly~~ displaced downwards so as

10 to have portions of its lateral surface contacting the respective guide means 14 provided in the axial columns 13, more specifically in an upper end portion of the axial columns 13, as illustrated in FIG. 2. Each guide means 14 is preferably defined by a radially internal end chamfer of the respective axial column 13.

In order to allow the upper mold portion 20 to be correctly and firmly coupled to the axial

15 columns 13, the latter are each provided with a locking means 15, which can take the form of a pin radially projecting from the respective axial column 13 and which is fitted in a lock receiving means 25 provided in the lateral surface of the upper mold portion 20 and which in the illustrated embodiment takes the form of a superficial groove presenting an axial extension for receiving the locking means 15 upon the axial displacement of the upper mold portion 20 in the guide means

20 14, and a short circumferential extension for receiving the locking means 15 when the upper mold portion 20 in the closed mold position is submitted to a certain rotation around its axis. Fitting the locking means 15 in the circumferential extension of the lock receiving means 25

provides the axial locking of the upper mold portion 20 in the axial columns 13 in the closed mold position.

It should be noted that the downward axial displacement of the upper mold portion 20 along the guide means 14 can be limited by stop means provided in the axial columns 13. In the illustrated embodiment, the stop means are defined by the locking means 15 themselves when they reach the upper end of the axial extension of the lock receiving means 25. However, other arrangements can be provided for the stop means, such as ~~for example the limitation of~~ limiting the downward displacement of the device that is responsible for the movement of the upper mold portion 20.

After ~~obtaining the~~ locking of the upper mold portion 20, the impelling means 60 is driven again, to release the moveable block 12 from the lower mold portion 10 and allow it to be axially ~~upwardly~~ displaced upwards by action of the elastic means 50, making the lamination stack PL ~~seat on~~ engage the upper mold cavity 20a, as illustrated in FIG. 4.

After the injection of the liquid metal through the upper mold portion 20 and after the solidification under centrifugation, the mold is opened according to an inverted sequence of movements, starting with the lower mold cavity 12a being displaced downwardly~~[[,]]~~ against the action of the elastic means 50 and then by the driving of the impelling means 60.

In order to assure a certain minimum spacing between the two mold cavities 12a and 20a, when the loading of a lamination stack PL is not taking place, the axial columns 13 may carry a spacer 70, for example in the form of a tubular sleeve provided between the moveable block 12 and the locking means 15 and which will be seated against the two mold portions when the latter reach a certain minimum spacing larger than that corresponding to the respective closed mold

positions. Although the invention has been illustrated and described particularly with reference to its preferred embodiment, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that several changes can be made in the form and in details thereof without departing from the spirit and protective scope of the invention.

ABSTRACT

A centrifugation injection mold comprising: a lower mold portion (10) having a basic block (11) ~~inferiorly and rotatively~~ the lower portion of which is mounted to and rotates within bearing means (30) that are affixed to a machine structure (E), a plurality of axial columns (13) ~~peripherally and superiorly~~ the bottom portions of which are affixed ~~to~~ around the outer portions of the basic block (11), and a moveable block (12) defining a lower mold cavity (12a) and being ~~slidingly~~ mounted in a sliding relationship to the axial columns (13), in order to be axially displaced between an open mold position and a closed mold position; an impelling means (60) operatively associated with the machine structure (E) and with the moveable block (12) for displacing ~~displace~~ the moveable block (12) to the open mold position against the action of an elastic means (50); a locking means (15) mounted to each axial column (13); and an upper mold portion (20) to be removably seated on the axial columns (13) and affixed thereto by the locking means (15) in a closed mold position.